

Problems ahead for aspiring engineering students of Assam

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UttamKumarBorthakur 16 June 2008 10471 views

Mr. Arjun Singh, HRD minister, Government of India, craves for the credit in reservation issue. But he has de-reserved, without consultation with the states, a part of the seats in the Regional Engineering Colleges now called National Institute of Technology. The removal of the word 'regional' may suggest the ascendancy of the centralising mind set in the federal india.

The all-India level examination known as AIEEE is conducted by the CBSE. The results were out by the 6th of June. The process called consultation with the students are to start today i.e. 16 June. At the eleventh hour, on 9 June 2008, Mr Arjun Singh issued a circular that threatens to reduce the number of students getting into these 'national' institutes from the north east leading to a widening of the gap in national average and the region's average in the opportunity to get technical education per lakh person.

In Silchar, Assam has the sole NIT. There are 460 seats. Out of that 230 seats are for the students of the state, who have qualified in AIEEE, in order of merit. The rest 230 seats are up for exchange with the seats of the NITs in other Union Territories and States. So, the first category is kind of reserved and second category too is reserved in the sense that it opens a vista for the students of the state to get into NITs in other states offering choice subjects for them.

Now the circular puts an end to the second category reservation. From this year, the second category shall not be the exchange domain of the state's students. Those seats will be filled up from the All-India merit list. As the students of the states like Assam are dispersed away from the higher ranks, and the students from UP/Bihar/Delhi appropriate the higher positions, naturally 230 seats of Silchar NIT will now be filled up by students from these states without Assam's earlier entitlement to exchange those seats for her students in other NITs.

Difference of a single mark may mean difference of a position by few thousand in the all India merit list. Assam's students do not stand a chance in this fierce competition. That the CBSE conducts the examination makes it difficult for students under the State's Higher Secondary Council. To add to the woes, some of the institutions from Assam are allowing students from affluent Delhi and other advanced

areas to take admission few months before the final examinations for a price, and by dint of that even these students are considered domiciles of Assam. These students are making a dent into the prospects of the state's students getting even the 230 seats that are still reserved for the state.

This last minute circular from HRD ministry was without consultation with the State Governments. It is contrary to the Minister's own finding and assurance in 2006 that he's duty bound to lift Assam to the national average in terms of opportunity for her aspiring students getting into technical institutes.

But in the global context, should we say 'let the fittest survive'.

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BY UTTAMKUMARBORTHAKUR

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